



MEMORANDUM

TO: District of Columbia Zoning Commission
FROM: Jennifer Steingasser, Deputy Director, Development Review and Historic Preservation
DATE: December 12, 2013
SUBJECT: ZC 11-15B: Campus Plan Amendment and Further Processing, Howard University Central Campus – Bethune Hall Annex Dining Facility

I. SUMMARY and RECOMMENDATION

On October 1, 2013, Howard University submitted an application, pursuant to § 507, to amend the Howard University Central Campus Plan, 2011 and for further processing to allow for the expansion of the dining facility and addition of a receiving/storage area and loading docks to the Bethune Hall Annex

The project has been thoughtfully designed to complement current uses and building materials of the adjacent residence halls and would not result in any additional students; would not generate additional parking; would not negatively affect neighboring properties; would be consistent with the approved Howard University Central Campus Plan, 2011; would be in harmony with the general purpose and intent of the zoning regulations; and would meet all use and bulk requirements of the D/SP-2 zones.

The Office of Planning supports the proposals and recommends **approval** of the application.

II. HOWARD UNIVERSITY CENTRAL CAMPUS MASTER PLAN, 2011

The Howard University Central Campus Plan 2011, approved by ZC-11-15, March 2, 2012, proposes an ambitious development plan for the university with over 2,316,584 gross square feet of new construction, major renovations and additions to existing buildings in three phases over the next seven years. An additional 672,623 gross square feet of development is projected in a future phase. The university is charting a new course of rejuvenation in academics to increase its stature to become a major comprehensive research university while at the same time continuing and expanding its public service role. The development proposal for the campus should lead to a major improvement of the internal campus, and have a positive impact on the external surrounding neighborhood. The development proposal would introduce more mixed-use development along Georgia Avenue, with ground floor retail and other active uses to serve the university as well as residents.

Although a number of major physical developments are proposed, the 12,000 student cap was retained with the university aiming to house at least 70% of its students on campus and in particular, the underclassmen. The residential functions of the university are concentrated on the eastern portion of the campus, for underclassmen, and also on the west side of Georgia Avenue. To help increase the underclassmen on campus, the university is currently constructing two new residence

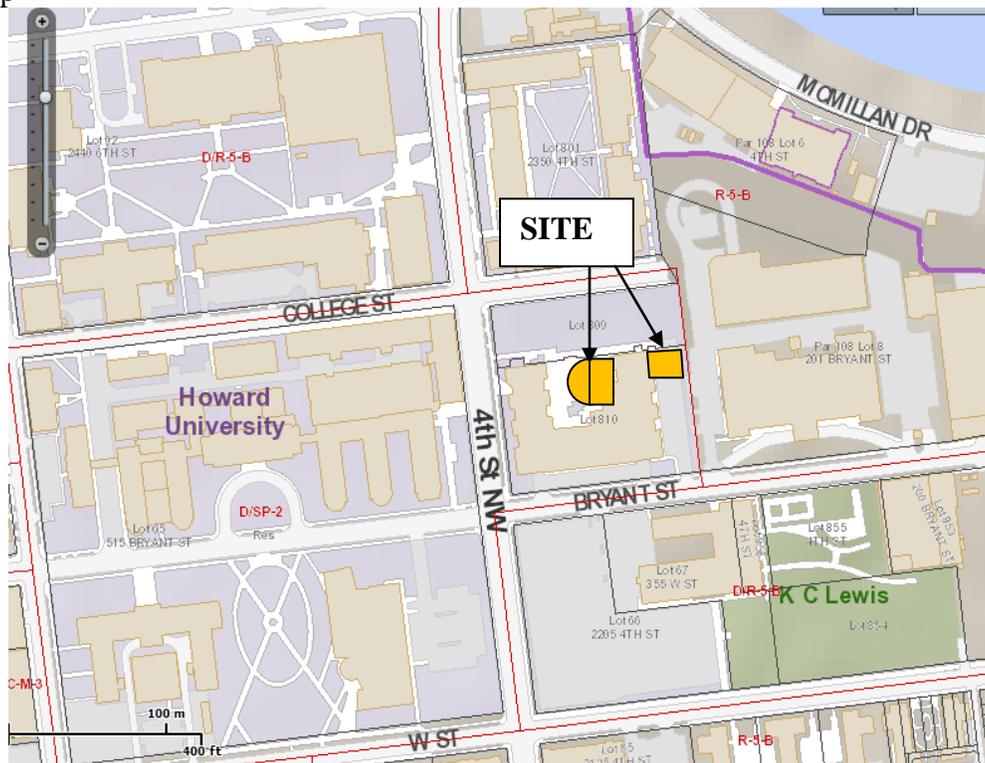


halls on the east side of the campus within the area designated for residences, along 4th Street NW¹ with 484 beds and at the southwest corner of the intersection of 4th and College Streets, NW² with 878 beds. Both residence halls are scheduled to open in Fall 2104.

III. SITE DESCRIPTION

The subject site is located at 2225 4th Street, NW (Square 3068, Lot 30) and is within the D/SP-2 zones. The square is currently developed with the Bethune Hall Residence Hall which contains approximately 557 beds. The addition to the Annex which is currently under development would house 484 beds. To the north of the square is the Tubman Quadrangle residence halls which houses approximately 313 units; to the east is the DC Water Pumping Station; to the south are the LeDroit Park Senior Housing apartments and the new residence hall to house 878 beds is currently under construction; and to the west is the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

Map



Site Location

III. PROPOSAL

The University proposes to expand the existing Bethune Hall Annex dining facility to complement and better serve the expanding student housing in this area. The addition would consist of an 8,007 square foot, 33-foot high, two-story building that would increase the number of seats in the facility from 277 to 550. A 793 square foot, 1-story addition to the ground floor of the kitchen would be

¹ Identified on the Howard University Central Campus Plan, 2011 as Site #3 and approved by ZC 11-15A, March 2, 2012

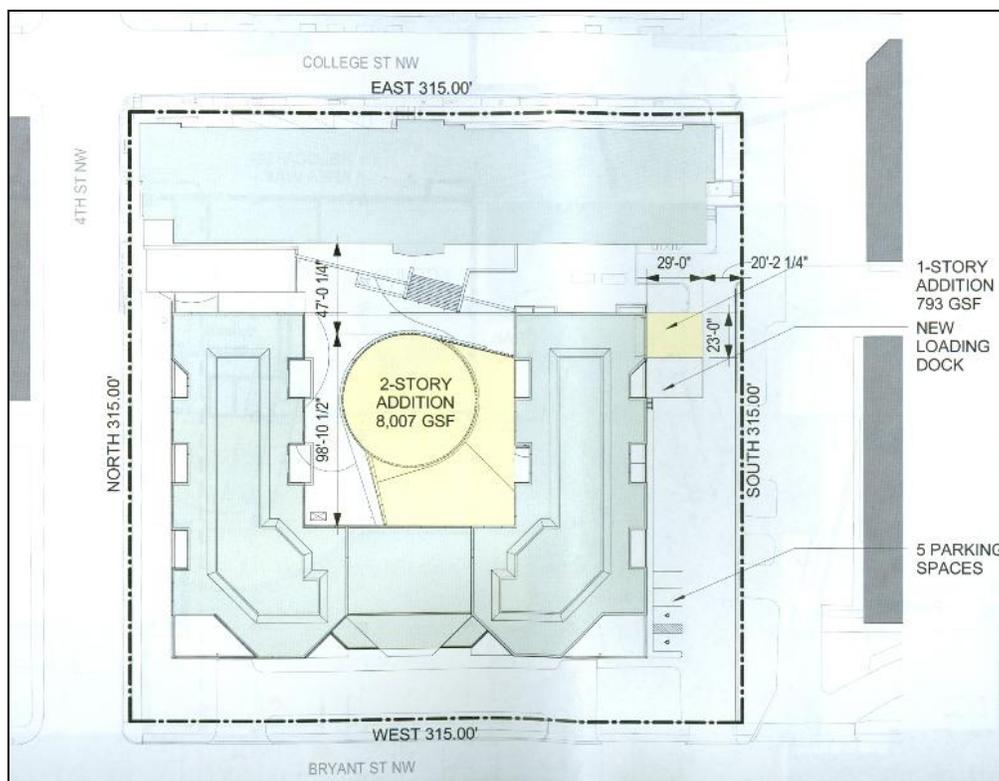
² Identified on the Howard University Central Campus Plan, 2011 as Site #4 and approved by ZC 11-15A, March 2, 2012

constructed on the eastern portion of the existing building for receiving, storage and other similar functions to support the dining facility.

An open loading dock to accommodate two, 55-foot trucks would be added adjacent to the receiving area to facilitate food service deliveries and waste management hauling. The loading dock would be accessed off Bryant Street via an existing curb cut. To accommodate the loading dock, 7 of the 12 parking spaces which currently serve the food service and university facilities staff would be removed.

The main entrance to the existing Bethune Hall Annex is off Bryant Street and has a central lobby area joining two wings of the building. The dining facility is on the east wing and the expansion would protrude for 2-floors from the existing dining area into the central court. The irregularly shaped ground floor would be topped off with a smaller circular dining area. The structure would be of glazed curtainwall systems with vertical lines and metal canopies. The addition would be surrounded by much higher structures, 7-stories, which would limit light into the internal court area. The proposed structural material complements the red brick of the surrounding residence halls and allows for maximum light penetration into the space. A circular skylight on the roof of the second floor would provide additional light into the dining area.

The rectangular, 1-story, 13.3-foot receiving area on the eastern side of the residence hall would be of a similar material as the existing building, red, brick veneer. To meet the University's desire to make its buildings and the campus more environmentally sustainable, additional landscaping has been added to the court area.



Site Plan for Square 3068

IV. ZONING

The subject property is zoned D/SP-2 and is therefore subject to the requirements of Section 507. The SP (Special Purpose) District is designed to “stabilize those areas adjacent to C-3-C and C-4 Districts and other appropriate areas that contain: (a) Existing apartments, offices, and institutions; and (b) Mixed use buildings.” A purpose of the SP District is to “act as a buffer between adjoining commercial and residential areas, and to ensure that new development is compatible in use, scale, and design with the transitional function of this zone district.” The district is “designed to preserve and protect areas adjacent to Commercial Districts that contain a mix of row houses, apartments, offices, and institutions at a medium to high density, including buildings of historic and architectural merit.” The SP-2 district allows medium-high density developments, and “new residential development shall be permitted at a higher density than new office development, both to be compatible with surrounding properties.”

The D (Mixed Use Diplomatic Overlay) District was established to implement the Foreign Missions Act and generally highlights embassy and/or chancery sites.

SP-2 Zone	Required	Existing	Proposed	Relief Requested
Lot Area	N/A	99,225 sf.	99,225 sf.	None
Lot Width	N/A	315.00 ft.	315.00 ft	None
Lot Occupancy	80%	43.4%	49.9%	None
FAR	6.0	3.68	3.76	None
Height	90 ft.	76 ft.	33 ft. and 13.3 ft.	None
Side Yard	N/A	5.83 ft.	5.83 ft.	None
Rear Yard	15.8 ft.	19 ft.	19 ft.	None
Open Court (width)	25.33 ft.	110 ft.	47 ft.	None
Parking	Calculated Campus wide ³	12 spaces	5	None
Loading Berth:	1-55 ft.	1-30 ft.	1-55-ft.	None
Service:	1-20 ft.	1-20 ft.	1-55 ft.	

As shown on the table, the addition plus the existing building meets the requirements of the SP-2 zone.

V. CAMPUS PLAN REVIEW STANDARDS

Section 507.1 requires that “a college or university that is an academic institution of higher learning including a college or university hospital, dormitory, fraternity, or sorority house proposed to be located on the campus of a college or university shall be permitted in an SP District if approved by the Zoning Commission as a special exception under §3104 of the Regulations, subject to the provisions of this section”.

³ The Campus Plan does not allot parking spaces on a building by building basis and calls for a reduction in parking campus wide. This addition would not generate any additional parking and the removal of 7 spaces would help in the aim to reduce campus wide parking.

507.2. Upon receiving an application for an approval under this section, the Commission shall submit the application to the DC Office of Planning for coordination, review, report, and impact assessment, along with reviews in writing from all relevant District departments and agencies, including the Departments of Transportation and Housing and Community Development, and, if a historic landmark or historic district is involved, the State Historic Preservation Officer.

The proposal was submitted to the District Department of Transportation (DDOT) who will submit their report under separate cover. The subject site is not within a historic district.

507.3 The applicant shall have submitted and the Commission shall have approved a plan for developing the campus as a whole.

The Howard University Master Campus Plan 2011 was approved by ZC 11-12, March 2, 2012.

507.4 The plan required in § 507.3 shall show the location, height, and bulk, where appropriate, of all present and proposed improvements, including but not limited to:

- (a) Buildings, parking and loading facilities, screening, signs, streets, and public utility facilities;**
- (b) Athletic and other recreational facilities;**
- (c) A description of all activities conducted or to be conducted in the proposed facilities; and**
- (d) A description of the capacity of all present and proposed campus development.**

The Howard University Master Campus Plan 2011 provides all the requirements outlined above. However, the proposed addition to the Bethune Hall Annex was not shown on the plan as it was subsequent to the approval of the Master Plan that the University became aware that the dining facilities would need to be expanded to accommodate the additional 1,362 students in the new residence halls. The proposed amendment to the Campus Plan provides the location, height, bulk of the proposed addition as well as a description of the proposed uses and its capacity.

507.5 The plan required in § 507.3 may provide for the interim use, for a limited period of time, of land or improved property with any use that is a proper college or university function.

The proposed amendment to the Campus Plan to accommodate the dining and loading facilities does not propose any interim use of the existing building or the proposed addition.

507.6. The Commission may approve the Campus Plan concurrent with application for approval of a specific college or university building or use.

The further processing for the proposed addition was submitted concurrently with the application for an amendment to the Campus Plan.

507.7 In approving the submitted plan, the Commission shall determine that the use is located so that it is not likely to become objectionable to neighboring property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or other objectionable conditions.

507.8. In approving any application for a specific college or university building or use, the Commission shall determine that the proposed building or use is consistent with the approved Campus Plan; and further, that it is not likely to become objectionable to neighboring property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or other objectionable conditions.

The subject property is located in the area designated for student housing on the Campus Plan. The proposed addition to the Bethune Hall Annex building would be within an internal courtyard surrounded by the existing and new residence halls. The receiving/storage and loading dock on the eastern portion of the building would be adjacent to the DC Water pumping station and although it may be visible by some residents of the LeDroit Park Senior Housing apartments, the addition is setback from Bryant Street thereby minimizing visual and noise impacts. The area is currently used for parking and loading and does not present any objectionable conditions for the residents.

The expansion of the dining facilities is needed to primarily accommodate the students in the new residence halls⁴. In ZC 11-15A it was demonstrated that the additional students generated by the two new residence halls in addition to the existing students are not likely to become objectionable because of noise, traffic, number of students, or other objectionable conditions. It is not envisioned that there would be any negative impacts from the number of students as the proposed expansion would not lead to an increase in students at this location over what was approved under ZC 11-15A and the students would not drive to the dining facility to require additional parking. The dining facility would be within an internal courtyard surrounded by the residence halls and therefore any noise from the students within or outside of the building would not affect residences to the south of Bryant Street or workers at the DC Water pumping station.

The applicant projects that 2 to 4 trucks would access the receiving/storage area and loading dock per day and would consist of food service deliveries and waste management hauling. The trucks would access the site via Georgia Avenue and Bryant Street without the need to travel through any residential areas. The facility is to the rear of the building, away from other residence halls and classrooms, thereby minimizing the effects of noise from the loading facility.

VI. COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan, Generalized Land Use Map and the Future Land Use Map (Attachment 1) identify the portion of the campus east of Georgia Avenue for Institutional Use. Further, the proposed development plan for the university and for the site in particular, is not inconsistent with many of the Land Use and Education policies of Comprehensive Plan.

⁴ Any University student with a meal plan would be allowed to use this dining facility.

Policy EDU-3.3.2: Balancing University Growth and Neighborhood Needs

“Encourage the growth and development of local colleges and universities in a manner that recognizes the role these institutions play in contributing to the District’s character, culture, economy and is also consistent with and supports community improvement and neighborhood conservation objectives. Discourage university actions that would adversely affect the character or quality of life in surrounding residential areas.”

The proposed addition would assist the University towards meeting its goal of accommodating at least 70% of its students on campus. The expansion of the dining facility would support and provide a service for the students. Further students would be encouraged to live on campus and not within the nearby residential neighborhoods and thus not affecting the neighborhood’s quality of life and character.

Policy EDU-3.3.4: Student Housing

“Encourage the provision of on-campus student housing in order to reduce college and university impacts on the housing stock in adjacent neighborhoods. Consider measures to address the demand for student housing generated by non-District institutions with local branches.”

The provision of the dining facility would complement the residence halls and encourage students to reside on campus and assist the University towards meeting its goal of accommodating at least 70% of its students on campus.

The specific recommendations for Howard University in the Mid-City Element are outlined below.

Policy MC-2.1.4: Howard University

“Encourage and strongly support continued relationship-building between Howard University and the adjacent residential neighborhoods. Work with Howard University in the abatement of any outstanding community issues such as the redevelopment of vacant property, façade/building enhancements, and buffering issues associated with campus expansion. Stimulate joint development opportunities with the University that benefit students and surrounding residents.”

Through the University’s Community Advisory Council, the approved campus plan has outlined measures by which negative impacts on the surrounding neighborhoods will be carefully monitored and lessened. The proposed level of development, although not anticipated in the Campus Plan, meets the aims and objectives of the Campus Plan. The proposed uses are not adjacent to residential uses and therefore would not have a negative impact on the neighboring community.

VII. COMMUNITY COMMENTS

The subject property is within the boundaries of ANC-1B who voted to recommend approval of the project on November 7, 2013. The university also made presentations to ANC-5E as well as the Pleasant Plains Civic Association, the Bloomingdale Civic Association, the LeDroit Park Civic Association, and the Georgia Avenue Community Development Task Force who all voted in

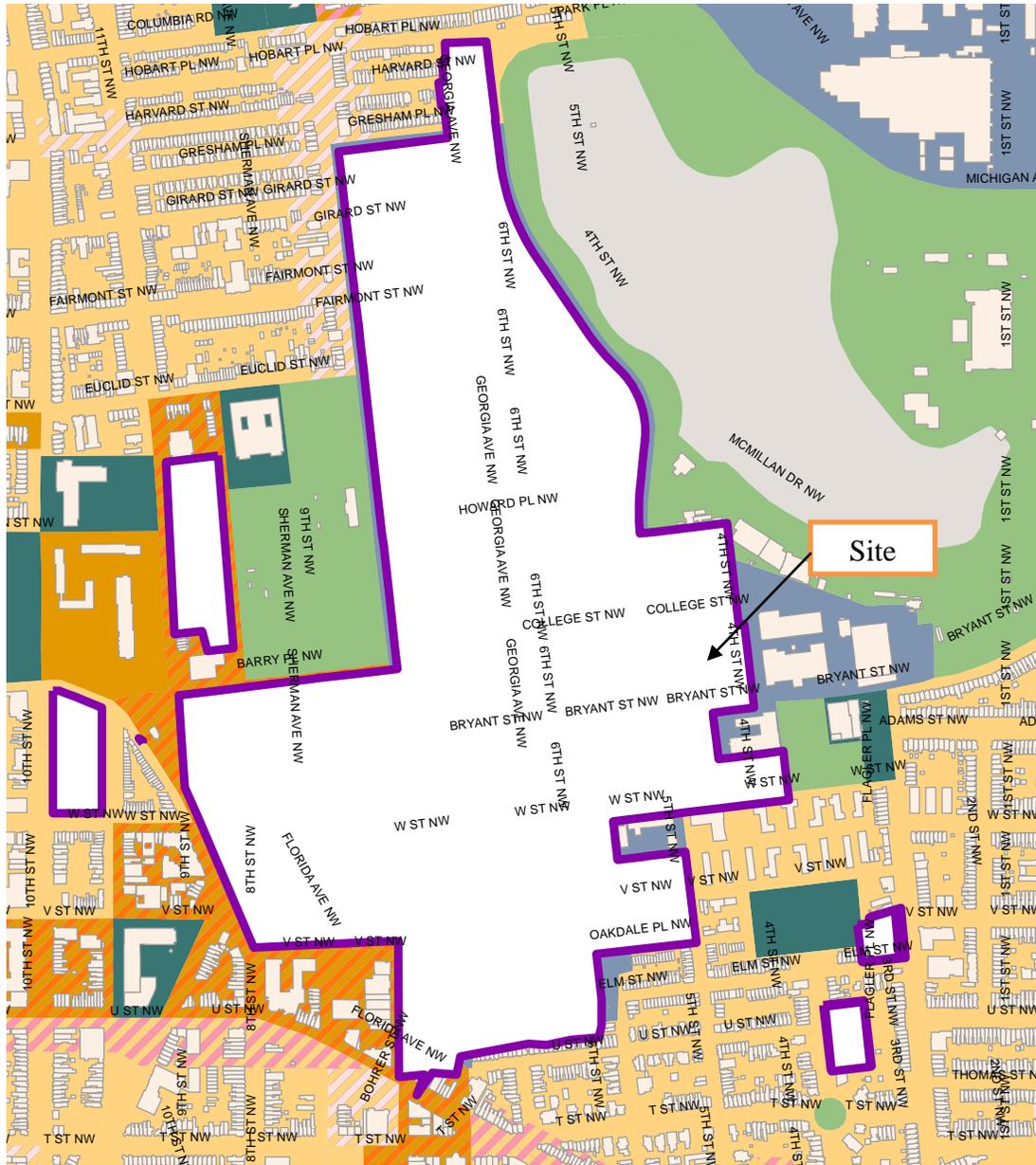
support of the proposed expansion of the dining facility to facilitate the University's desire to house more of its students on campus.

VIII. COMMENTS OF OTHER DISTRICT AGENCIES

The Department of Transportation will submit a report under separate cover.

Attachment I

ZC 11-15B – Howard University Central Campus Plan Amendment and Further Processing



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – POLICY MAP

